The COMPASS

AMERICAN·ASSOCIATION·OF·SOCIAL·WORKERS
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Standards for State Relief Program

CONCERTED action recommending minimum standards for the administration of federal relief in Massachusetts has been taken by the four Massachusetts Chapters. The recommendations were drawn up by the Worcester Chapter and approved by the other three chapters, Boston, Southeastern Massachusetts, and Western Massachusetts. Following this action, the recommendations were presented to Joseph Bartlett, Chairman of the Massachusetts Emergency Finance Board.

The chapters urged a system of administration which would permit individualized approach to each family, thereby making possible a measure of adjustment of family problems and utilization of social resources of the community in behalf of families. As a means of developing this minimum standard of casework practice, the chapters recommended that the State department charged with the disposition of federal funds appoint a field staff qualified by training and experience to meet the membership requirements of the A.A.S.W. "The function of the field staff," the recommendations state, "should not be interpreted in a narrow or legalistic fashion but the members of the staff should be able to offer to the local units, leadership, educational guidance and stimulus in a broad understanding and interpretation of the spirit, purpose and techniques of social case work and should give every possible encouragement to the local units in the establishment of such standards as look towards reconstruction of family life and the restoration of self-dependence and initiative."

The local units which the chapters believe to be best fitted for administering federal relief under state supervision and leadership in Massachusetts are the local boards of public welfare. However, in many places these boards lack trained and experienced social work directors and an adequate staff of visitors. The chapters therefore recommend that trained and experienced family casework directors or supervisors should be placed in positions of responsibility in all local units where the present director does not have sufficient training or experience to qualify for membership in the A.A.S.W.

On the question of residence, the suggestion is made that local residence be waived so that qualified persons may be drawn from any part of the State though it is not suggested that State residence be waived.

In selecting visitors the merit system is recommended, with the further suggestion that civil service regulations should lay greater emphasis on educational background, professional training, experience and personality, and less emphasis on legal details and departmental procedures.

Other recommendations include a standard family budget sufficient to provide adequate food, cleaning and laundry supplies, shelter, fuel, light, clothing, medical and burial care; record and statistical forms for a unified system of records, bookkeeping and auditing; regular monthly reports; establishment of local social service exchanges; the districting of the State with a trained supervisor or director in charge of each district, and an advisory committee to the State administrative department which would assist in working out administrative procedures and which should include several outstanding leaders in social work.

"It should be the expectation and objective," the recommendations conclude, "that the administration of federal aid through the boards of public welfare should be the stepping stone to higher standards of public relief administration as a whole, based upon the case work approach and method."

Jobs in Social Work

The employment situation in social work is excellent as far as the number of opportunities is concerned and if conditions of work are disregarded, according to the report made by the Director of Joint Vocational Service, Lillian Quinn, to the Board of Directors in October. From January to October, 1933, there were 998 positions listed and 2570 candidates registered. The number of positions available and worked on by the J.V.S. is actually very much larger, but the exact figure is not known because emer-

gency relief directors do not ordinarily report separate positions, but place a general order for personnel. J.V.S. believes that 400 positions would be a conservative estimate of the number worked on in this indirect manner. This would make a total estimate of nearly 1400 positions for the first nine months in 1933, instead of 998.

The extent to which J.V.S. has been used by emergency relief organizations is indicated by the fact that 37 states requested it to supply personnel. The Federal Relief Administration asked for a list of 100 to 200 available persons which could be used by field representatives when asked for recommendations for trained personnel, and the J.V.S. supplied 157 names for this purpose.

Records on interviews and correspondence show that interviews have decreased this year while correspondence has increased. This may indicate, the J.V.S. believes, that the service is on more of a national basis than it was a year ago. Another factor in the reduction of interviews may be that more definite minimum standards for registration in the social work field have been required this year than previously. Under these minimum standards J.V.S. does not register any applicants for positions in social work who have not had either experience in the field or a substantial amount of training in one of the member schools of the American Association of Schools of Professional Social Work.

Professional Training for the Smaller Community

ENLARGEMENT of its Extension Department program to permit "more systematic service in staff and community education" has been announced by the Pennsylvania School of Social and Health Work. In addition to extension courses given at the School for those within commuting distance, extra-mural courses will be given in communities at some distance from Philadelphia by instructors associated with the School.

These courses are being planned so that students who satisfactorily complete the courses and who are eligible for matriculation at the School will receive credit toward the fulfillment of the School's requirements and also toward membership in the A.A.S.W.

The educational requirements for admission to the courses for beginners will be similar to the minimum educational requirements for membership in the A.A.S.W., namely two years of college work. For the advanced courses the educational requirement will be the same and in addition the student will be required to have the equivalent of two terms of case work in a school of social work and as much subsequent experience as would be required for admission to the A.A.S.W.

The courses which can be made available to communities outside Philadelphia during the fall term this year are as follows:

SOCIAL CASE WORK I. For beginners in professional service.

SOCIAL CASE WORK III. Advanced course.

HUMAN BEHAVIOR. Considering problems of personality as they appear in the social case work job, for beginners.

PROBLEMS OF PERSONALITY AS THEY APPEAR TO THE PSYCHIATRIST. A lecture course open to both beginning and advanced workers.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF AND SOCIAL WORK. Open to unemployment relief workers and both beginning and advanced case workers.

PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION IN SOCIAL AGENCIES. Available either as an institute extending over several days, or as an extra-mural extension course extending over a term or more, especially designed for executives and sub-executives of social agencies.

The following course will be available later in the year and may be available in the fall term:

SOCIAL WORK PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE. A survey of social work activities and methods in the light of changing points of view and objectives. A lecture and discussion course extending over a term or more, especially designed for executives and sub-executives of social agencies.

In order to meet the needs of as many communities as possible this coming year, only one extra-mural course will be offered to any one community during any one term. The courses will consist of ten class periods of from one and a half to two hours each, usually held once a week. The School's fee to the sponsoring group in a community which wishes to have a course will be $300 per term per course. Registration will be limited to between fifteen and twenty-five students, except possibly for some of the lecture courses. All applications for admission will be formally acted upon by the School.

Field work can be taken for credit in connection with extra-mural extension courses under

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treatment should be worked out as has been done in the probation and parole service.

4. While social investigation and tabulation of data are extremely important, the social worker should have an opportunity to function as a social worker in planning and carrying out treatment.
5. This requires training in modern social work technique to enable the social worker to cooperate intelligently with the psychiatrist or psychologist on difficult cases.
6. The social worker should be a member of the classification committee in the prison in order to collect and assemble data and recommendations from the various prison divisions and to assist in planning for the treatment of the individual.
7. The social worker should carry out the treatment program indicated by investigation and social study. This would include interpreting the program to the prison staff in direct charge of the prisoner. This cannot be done successfully unless the prison officials and prison staff have enough social knowledge and background to assist in carrying out a casework program.
8. The social worker should assist in preparing the prisoner for discharge or parole. This would include more service than is usually given in finding a new and better environment in the community by calling in cooperating agencies where the prison social worker is unable to do this personally.
9. In addition to professional qualifications adequate to meet the A.A.S.W. membership requirements, previous experience in prison work is recommended for prison social workers. The suggestion is made that interneships in casework in prisons should be encouraged and that prison social work departments should assist in the training of qualified individuals who desire to enter prison social service.

THE CASE FOR THE PRACTITIONERS' MOVEMENT

The following statement was prepared by a group of A.A.S.W. members who are active in the Discussion Clubs in New York and who would like to see a Practitioners' Group formed in the New York Chapter of the A.A.S.W.

THE ferment characterizing American industry today furnishes the background against which the lesser ferment within social work itself must be viewed for a proper perspective. Specifically, however, the rise of the so-called Practitioners' Movement and the interest it has aroused may be ascribed broadly to the severe deflation in personnel standards and salaries in social work, and to the admission to the field of thousands of untrained workers recruited to staff the public relief agencies created by the depression. As a group these newcomers have been subject to an exploitation made possible only by the hysteria of an emergency, and have found that at certain points their dissatisfactions coincide with the demand for another philosophy and another leadership felt by some of the older group, mainly under the unpleasant pressures of the deflationary experience.

In reality there are four groups that are affected. There is first the membership of the A.A.S.W., a relatively small and select group, the inheritor of all the traditions good and bad of social work, and the spokesman for the profession as a whole. Within this group is to be distinguished a second group, by far the majority, consisting of the case worker, the sub-executive person, the "practitioner," largely inert, non-participating, and content as a rule to have the activity of the A.A.S.W. chapter confined to a small inner self-perpetuating circle of executives, which prepares the program, steers committees and makes all important decisions. Within the third group may be found the social workers who are eligible to join the A.A.S.W., but do not choose to do so. The non-eligibles, mainly the new recruits of 1930-1933, comprise the fourth group.

What are the needs of these four groups, separately and in common? How can they be met? Within the A.A.S.W.? Without the A.A.S.W.?

There is a vital need, to begin with, of a medium of expression. It would be supererogatory to urge the eminent fitness of the A.A.S.W., as at present constituted, to voice the program and outlook of the executives in social work. It has spoken for the leadership in social work in the past and speaks for it today. Except insofar as silence gives consent it does not speak to quite such an extent for the mute practitioner member. The attempts of local chapters to stimulate wider participation through study groups has failed to meet the fundamental problem involved. Study groups do not cater to the need for taking on responsibility, which can be satisfied only by a genuine sharing of leadership. Owing to fundamental divergences on economic questions, leadership cannot be shared adequately within the chapter executive. For the

present the dilemma is met most satisfactorily, perhaps through the formation of a fairly autonomous Practitioners' Group within the chapter which will give the younger worker the opportunity for leadership and prepare him for a more active role in the chapter itself.

The eligible non-member group, large, inarticulate, presents a potential strength that can be tapped only through a dynamic program. This group can and should find a voice in the Practitioners' Group, one of whose functions it might be to provide the kind of program round which the well-trained but organizationally indifferent social worker might be rallied.

The A.A.S.W., restricted at present to professional problems, has practically nothing to offer the permanently ineligible group. It might encourage the growth of study circles for the emergency relief worker and engage in other activities of an educational nature. But the very purpose of the A.A.S.W. successfully precludes the possibility of its being regarded as a medium of expression by the ineligible social worker. He can and does find a place for himself in the Discussion Clubs.

The second need of all four groups is action on personnel standards and salaries. The word "action" is used advisedly, for the period of fact-finding and pointing-to-facts, is over. It is here that the fundamental interests of the executive group and the other three groups differ, and differ sharply. While it would be contentious to deny the genuine interest of the executive in the development and maintenance of adequate personnel standards and salaries, he is subject to the greater pressure of his board of directors, and again and again in the past three years has failed his workers in a crisis. The financing body is interested in running the social work plant at the lowest possible cost consistent with acceptable standards. Social workers have not found security in the gift of their executives. On the other hand, whether within the A.A.S.W. or without, social workers have in common a need to organize for effective action on economic problems. Such organization, call it collective bargaining if you will, finds a favorable setting today in the stimulus given the labor movement by the NRA. The A.A.S.W. has proven ineffectual in its feeble efforts to stem the deflationary tide. It has labored for many years under the illusion that salaries and standards are a by-product of public recognition, and that the latter is to be gained by "selling" social work to the community. A.A.S.W. members below the executive rank can, however, take collective action through their Practitioners' Group, which in turn will apply pressure upon the parent chapter to assume a more positive attitude on standards and salaries. Of greater importance is common action with the non-A.A.S.W. member. Standards and salaries are of vital concern to all social workers, trained and untrained. The formation of a broad economic organization to take in all social workers is indicated. Such a step is with the future. For the present social workers must measure their strength with A.A.S.W. chapters and seek the help of organized groups outside. The non-eligible group, for the present, is shorn of bargaining power for lack of organization. If the experience of Chicago has any significance, it should point to the assumption of protective functions for this group on the part of Discussion Clubs.

The third need of the social worker, within and without the A.A.S.W., is for participation in broad movements looking towards social betterment. The A.A.S.W. has proven excessively timid in its pronouncements on issues of vital social importance and even today does not possess the machinery to tap sentiment and express it effectively. It is rather extraordinary that an organization as close to the social pathology of our civilization as the A.A.S.W. should be so silent concerning the validity of solutions proposed. Conference addresses and magazine articles boast of the leadership of social work and its contributions to "social engineering," but where is the social program of the A.A.S.W.?

Practitioners' Groups can legitimately examine the structure of our society, indorse specific measures looking to its improvement and contribute its share to making heard the voice of social work on questions on which it is entitled to speak with authority. In doing so it will do more to obtain public recognition than twenty years of "educational" efforts of the traditional but ineffectual variety.

Books

The Dynamics of Therapy in a Controlled Relationship. Jessie Taft. MacMillan & Company. $2.50.

By LEAH FEDER

THE contributions of the psycho-analysts have been, generally speaking, easily available to case workers through English translations and the writings of American followers interested in applying the techniques to the case work situation. Dr. Taft presents the less familiar "relationship therapy" of Otto Rank which is "anti-pathetic to the Freudian psychology and practice." Not only does the author describe clearly the points of difference in this philosophy and its outstanding characteristics, but she devotes almost five-sixths of her book to the history of her contacts with two different children in a therapeutically limited relationship.

the following specified conditions:

1. The work must be done under a supervisor who is qualified both in academic and professional preparation for full membership in the A.A.S.W. and who has had in addition at least one year of actual experience in a social agency of recognized standing.
2. The supervisor must undertake to afford the student at least two hours a week of person conference and to use the necessary additional time for the selection of material, the reading of the student's records, etc., and to agree either to attend the conference of supervisors at the School every two weeks or to devote at least an hour of conference each two weeks with the instructor of the course to discuss the students' specific problems.
3. The student, with the agreement of the supervisor and the agency must be permitted such adjustment of case load as to afford leeway of time to permit, for the student, particularly thoughtful consideration and treatment of a few special case problems.

Field work taken under these conditions will be credited by the School up to one-third of the School's requirements for field work in the regular curriculum, provided the student is qualified for regular matriculation at the School and provided such matriculation is completed within a reasonable time after the completion of these extension courses. Field work taken in this way and accepted for credit by the Pennsylvania School will be accredited under the membership requirements of the A.A.S.W.

SOCIAL WORK IN PRISONS

RECOGNITION of the importance of social work in prisons is making headway. At the last meeting of the American Prison Congress a Subcommittee on Social Work presented a report describing the staff equipment and method of operation of social work services in a number of representative institutions throughout the country and making recommendations for the organization of an adequate service and for the professional qualifications for the personnel. The professional qualifications recommended by the Committee are "at least the minimum qualifications as to education, training and experience laid down by the A.A.S.W. for admission to its membership." The chairman of the Committee making the report was Leon Stern of the Pennsylvania Committee on Penal Affairs of the Public Charities Association and the report, including the recommendation that social workers in prisons should be eligible to A.A.S.W. membership, was accepted by the American Prison Congress. Copies of the report are now being circulated throughout the country with a statement of the A.A.S.W. membership requirements attached, so that there will be thorough understanding of what these requirements include. The Prison Congress also voted to continue the Committee for another year and the Committee expects to study further the question of professional qualifications for social workers in prisons and reformatories.

In securing data on existing facilities and staff for prison casework the Committee was impressed by the fairly rapid growth of such facilities. Only those were considered to belong to the social work staff whose duties were those of the professional caseworker, including social investigation, social diagnosis, plans for treatment, carrying out treatment, etc. At the present time the social investigator who obtains social data, prepares social records and reports is employed more frequently than the caseworker who participates in treatment. Even though this last type of function is more rarely found, social workers who assist in the classification of inmates, establish relationships with families, employers and friends, and with paroling authorities, prisoners' aid societies, etc., are found quite frequently.

Setups for social casework were found to vary widely. Sometimes the social worker is an administrative assistant, sometimes he is a social investigator for the classification service, sometimes he works under the direction of the psychiatrist or psychologist. In some instances, there is no social worker attached to the institution but social work service is given by another cooperative governmental department, such as the probation or parole department.

After giving examples of various types of organization for casework service to be found in prisons today, the Committee makes some suggestions for a comprehensive program, including the following:

1. Each prison should have at least one properly trained social worker and in larger institutions the staff should be in proportion to the population.
2. The social work staff should be under the general direction of the prison administrator in order to relate the social work program to the rest of the prison program for the inmate.
3. Caseload standards for investigation and

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Dr. Taft traces her own development from the period when "reform" of the person according to her own superior knowledge gave place gradually to "a therapy which is purely individual, non-moral, non-scientific, non-intellectual, which can take place only when divorced from all limit of control, unless it be the therapist's control of himself in the therapeutic situation." As a social worker, Dr. Taft would like to clarify the confusion in many social work agencies between "social work as therapy and social work with some other practical goal." For the case worker who has herself first been a patient, the possibilities of working out a controlled relationship are many.

The first section of the book, "The Time Element in Therapy," is a reprint of Dr. Taft's paper at the National Conference of Social Work in Philadelphia in 1932. It brings out clearly the emphases in her philosophy. "Therapy" is used instead of treatment because the latter term implies a manipulation of one person by another, while therapy, derived from a Greek verb "to wait," implies the limitation in the therapist's role dependent upon the use the person wishes to make of the therapists. Whatever the therapist does lies within his personal development and "his ability to use consciously for the benefit of his client, the insight and self-discipline he has achieved," and here Dr. Taft points out most helpfully in her illustrative material where she has occasionally failed and why. Again we are reminded that far from being purely passive, a dynamic relationship involves an intense activity in the direction "of attention, of identification, of adaptation to the individual's need and pattern."

Contrary to the psycho-analytic concept of the use of a person through whom the past may be relived, Dr. Taft accepts the dynamic relationship as "valuable in and for itself." It is not the content of the material revealed in the hour with the therapist which is important, it is the new experience in the present in relation to the therapist. The hour assumes a qualitative value. "The individual finally learns to utilize the allotted hour from beginning to end without undue fear, resistance, resentment or greediness. When he can take it and also leave it without denying its value, without trying to escape it completely or keep it forever because of this very value, in so far as he has learned to live, and strange as it may seem, if he can live this hour he has in his grasp the secret of all hours, he has conquered life and time for the moment and in principle."

In attempting to give thus briefly the method described with such clarity in the book, one becomes aware of the value of the two long records of the contacts with the children as the author has made them part of her explanation of therapy. Seven-year-old Helen expresses her escape from fear in overt behavior of a negative type. Her family stand ready to help when they are taught how. John has been accepted for placement by a child-placing agency practically deserted by a mother to whom he clings, and the contacts with the therapist are to help him accept placement in a foster home. He is a charming child as he is brought to life for us through Dr. Taft's record of her contacts with him. The only question as to Dr. Taft's relationship is her insistence that she does not resort to interpretation, "except a verbalization on my part of what the child seemed to be feeling or doing, a comparatively spontaneous response to the child's words or actions which should clarify or make more conscious the self of the moment whatever it might be." This verbalization may have been all that took place, but in reproducing the moment in her record it sounds occasionally as if Dr. Taft had done more than this. We realize how difficult it is to catch the subleties of such a relationship and Dr. Taft has done it so well on the whole that little has been lost.

To read this book along with that other recent study of work with children, Melanie Klein's "The Psycho-analysis of Children," will bring out sharply all the differences between the psycho-analytic method and that of the dynamic therapy Dr. Taft describes. Fortunately both books contain sufficient record material and explanation to make the comparison possible and profitable.